General Discussion of the Budget.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Mr. President, Sir.

Before entering into the discussion of the budget proper, I beg your leave on behalf of the Progressive Party, which I have the honour to lead, that the Party has heard with gratitude the kind and sym pathetic message that His Highness, our Beloved Maharaja, has sent to this Council through you yesterday. The Party, ever loyal to His Highness, has, as its aim, the very same welfare of the people of Cochin so near the loving heart of His Highness, and has, as its object, the promotion and advancement of the subjects of His Highness in all human activities and the furtherance of their prosperity and contentment under the enlightened and broadminded rule of His Highness. We do hope that, in the coming years, the association of the people through their representatives with the administration will be broadened down from precedent to precedent, and based on the broad will of the people under the guidance of such a benign and constitutional Ruler as ours to advance Cochin to the forefront of the Progressive States of India.

I can assure you, Sir, that progressive and responsive co-operation is our watch-word also, and His Highness may rest assured that the work of the Council will not at any time be retarded by want of co-operation *on our part*. May His Highness live long!

We are now entering the Second Legislative Council of our State. I am glad many of the old Members have been again returned by our constituencies, indeed in appreciation of our honest and strenuous endeavours to help the general progress of the State during the last Council.

At the very outset, I think it is necessary to make a brief review of the working of the last Council, so that our future-attempts may be guided by the wisdom we have gained from it. In the last Council, I must confess with regret that our work was far from producing any satisfactory results. The new-born baby found in its official Diwan-President a jealous step-mother who stinted to give the baby its due nourishment. The President, instead of allowing the Legislative Body its legitimate and legal rights granted by His Gracious Highness our Maharaja, was always on the war-path, and successfully manoeuvred to curtail its liberties. Instead of helping to make the Legislative Council a really popular assembly, exercising a wholesome check upon the vagaries of the executive, the President was apparently determined to see that it remained a thing for mere show to the outside world.

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Mr. A. K. Vengu Ayyar.—Are these remarks in order, Sir?

Dr. A. G. Menon.—What words please? This is quite parliamentary, according to me.

Mr. A. K. Vengu Ayyar.—I simply raise a point of order.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—What is the point of order?

Mr. A. K. Vengu Ayyar.—It is not exactly a word. President curtailing the liberties of the Members of the House.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—We are to bring to the notice of the Government through this House whatever we have to say. This is the only opportunity for us—during the General Discussion of the Budget—to place all our grievances before this House and the President. I am not saying anything against the rulings of the President.

President.—Last year, during the Budget Session there was a ruling by the President that his rulings cannot be questioned.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Then I was questioning the rulings of the President, and the President said that I was out of order. That ruling does not say that we should not bring in our grievances. Now I am not questioning the rulings of the President. I am only placing before this House and the President the grievances of the non-official Members of this House.

Perhaps the President's anomalous position was responsible for this result. If so, the problem has to be solved by unceasing effort on our part to get an elected President, which will mark the first mile-stone in the long way of our progress. The rulings, interpretations and the rule-making prerogatives of the President put obstacles in the work of the non-official Members in the Council, and the result was that three years have been almost wasted by fruitless discussions of subjects, both important and unimportant. So long as his interpretations of Standing Order 6 (2) remains in force, I am afraid, this Council also will have to share the same fate as that of the last, as far as non-official work is concerned. It behoves us, therefore, to fight for the enforcement of all our legitimate rights in this direction.

President.—I must say you are out of order. The actions of the President cannot be discussed.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—I am only placing before the House certain actions of the President, and not questioning his rulings.

Mr. A. K. Vengu Ayyar.—The arguments that are now urged are against the provisions of the Regulation.

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Dr. A. G. Menon.—I am not saying anything against the rulings of the President. I am only bringing non-official grievances before this House.

Mr. A. K. Vengu Ayyar.—It is against the provisions of the Regulation.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—Will you please quote the section?

Mr. A. K. Vengu Ayyar.—Clause 11.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—Clause 11 does not refer to these. The Rules and Regulations were made by His Highness the Maharaja for the guidance of this House.

Mr. A. K. Vengu Ayyar.—It is not clause 11. It is clause 4. "The Diwan shall be the *ex-officio* President," and so on.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—It is only through this House people can bring in their grievances to our Maharaja.

Mr. A. K. Vengu Ayyar.—Whether this is the proper place to bring your grievances is the question.

Dr A. G. Menon.—Clause 4 says that the Diwan shall be the *ex-officio* President. Nobody questioned that the Diwan should not be the President.

Mr. A. Sankara Menon.—I do not think that this is in order, under the Regulation and Rules.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Which section of it, please?

Mr. A. Sankara Menon.—I do not think that this matter can be discussed because the provisions of the Regulation cannot be discussed.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—I have finished my say on that point. This is all what I have to say.

I must also say that the Government was not fair and square to us regarding the replies to our interpellations. In the first year, the treatment meted out to us regarding the answers to our questions and supplementary questions was somewhat fair. The number of questions answered also was satisfactory and encouraging. But alas!, in the last two years, a reaction set in. Need I say the reason why?

Mr. V. K. Kochunni Menon.—I do not know whether this is in order. What is contemplated in Rule 40 of the Rules is the discussion of the budget and all the items thereunder.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—If this is the principle involved thereunder, and if there is deficiency in the budget, what are we to do? Sir, this is the only occasion when we can bring our viewpoints before the Government. In the Madras Legislative Council, during the General Discussion of the Budget, the Members bring in all their grievances and place them before the Government. I do not see why we are to confine to budget figures

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alone, then I am afraid there will not be much scope for us to place our views before the Government. Efficiency of the administration is one of them.

Mr. V. K. Kochunni Menon.—But they should be within the scope of the Regulation.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—Efficiency of administration is the most important point. We have every right to criticise the administration. This House is to decide whether it is efficient or inefficient.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—According to our view, it is the Government that should decide the points placed before it. We place all our grievances, on our standpoints of view, all facts before the Government about the efficiency of the administration.

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—Similarly we are also criticised by the Government, so far as we know.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—Gevernment knows where the shoe pinches.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Having dealt with the work of the First Council, I should like to say a few words about the administration in general of the State. I base my remarks mostly on the admissions made in the First Council and elsewhere by Government.

Public Service.

I shall take first the Public Service. The efficiency of the administration of any country is really the efficiency of the Public Service. Applying this test, what do we see around us? Is the Public Service maintained on the lines of efficiency in our State?

I am constrained to say that the first principle observed in our State is *the principle of favouritism and nepotism*. This abhorent principle is allowed to have a free run in matters of appointments, of promotions and even of retirements. Efficiency, both physical and mental, and merit do not count, when men are entertained to Government service; and extensions of service are freely given to men, who are the special favourites of the authorities in power. Legitimate promotions are not secured for competent men because favoured ones have to be promoted over them; and the superannuation rule is simply ignored, to keep the favoured ones in the service, and thereby to thwart the promotions of many a deserved one. I ask, can we expect efficiency when the Public Service is run on these lines? I shall not go to particular instances. They are well known in the State as well as outside it. It is only too true that, in our State, posts are

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